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LB 962

it's something that benefits the whole state and it should be left that way. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Kremer. Senator Baker, on FA1524.

SENATOR BAKER: Thank you, Senator Cudaback and members of the Legislature. I think you're beginning to hear from some senators who have a real interest in this and can demonstrate the need for the bill. I represent a big part of the Republican River Basin, southwest Nebraska, and I can tell you right now, we're going through some major, major changes in the way we do business in the Republican River Basin as a result of lack of foresight and the will to change. And this is going to spread across the state. As Senator Erdman pointed out, there were...there was the presentation to the State Supreme Court yesterday dealing with the Pumpkin Creek. I...this isn't going to stop all the lawsuits by any means. What we're going to see, though, if we don't enact LB 962, is more and more friction between surface water users, ground water users, and so on. Out in my area, we have not had surface water use the last couple of years out of several of our reservoirs. And we can bury our head in the sand; and I can tell you, it's going to be the dry sand of the Republican River. There's no water in it, for the most part, out there. You can walk down it, the RV, the four-wheelers, and so on are using it as a playground, where it used to flow water. But my point is that if we don't do something here, this is going to spread across the state. And it's been pointed out by Senator Erdman, Senator Kremer, the eastern end of the state, the water flows downhill, folks, and it's coming from the west. And if we don't have any water out west, don't manage it correctly, and have all these lawsuits between surface water users, ground water users, and so on, it's going to have a trickle down effect--probably a poor choice of words here--but eastern Nebraska is going to feel the effect sooner...in a short period of time here before they realize it. So I think this is a statewide issue. It's not something that the irrigators need to pay for. It's something that...it concerns...it should concern the entire state of Nebraska, every citizen in the state. We have a resource that at one time...it's always been a valuable resource, but there was a